Heritage Ranch Community Services District

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Date: August 1, 2022

To: HRCSD customers

Subject: KSBY Article and Water Quality

Dear HRCSD Customers:

This letter is in response to the recent KSBY article, "Report revealing hundreds of failing districts in California" dated July 28, 2022. The intent of the article appears to be to inform that there are water systems that have contaminated water, but the bigger message is that the State Water Resources Control Board has a lack of urgency in getting funding to smaller water systems.

For clarification, some important points incorrectly implied by the article are:

1. The Heritage Ranch Community Services District (HRCSD) does not use well water (groundwater). HRCSD's only source of water is surface water from Nacimiento Reservoir. Water systems must meet stringent State standards and surface water has its own unique challenges, organics being one of them.

2. HRCSD water does not contain arsenic, uranium, or nitrates from agricultural runoff as the article implies. It should also be noted that the article is talking about source water, not treated water. HRCSD does a good job making water from our challenging surface water source. However, we are currently exceeding in one area and that is disinfection byproducts (DBPs), specifically Haloacetic Acids, which are a result of the necessary disinfection process of chlorine addition reacting with organics.

3. You **do not** need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply and this is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Everything we do to produce water is regulated by the State Division of Drinking Water. Operating our water system is very transparent and is in accordance with State regulations. Reporting requirements can be found on our website and/or the State's website.

4. HRCSD is not a small public water system, nor is it run by volunteers. A small public water system is defined as "*Regulated drinking water systems that supply water for human consumption and have 5 to 200 service connections or serve 25 individuals at least 60 days out of the year."* We are classified as a community water system with over 1,950 connections and employ highly trained, educated, and extremely valuable, water, wastewater, and administrative staff.

Please consider things you hear or read in the media. If you do not totally understand something or have a question that falls under HRCSD purview, call us. We are more than happy to help understand these sometimes-complicated issues.

Additional information can also be found on our website, or in the letter included with the July bill. Some of that same information is included again below.

Thank you.

What happened? What was done?

As previously mentioned, this is not an immediate health risk. Organic levels in Nacimiento Reservoir and Nacimiento River have substantially increased over time and most recently the Chimney Fire, resulting in higher levels of haloacetic acids created from the treatment process, specifically the use of chlorine for required disinfection. We are actively pursuing all available options to lower the organics and the haloacetic acid MCL's within the system. Staff continues to adjust the water treatment and distribution system processes and are currently working closely with the Division of Drinking Water to fine tune those processes while maintaining compliance with many other parameters. We are renovating the Water Treatment Plant filters, testing a new chemical(s) to improve removal of organics, continue a robust waterline flushing program, and have recently completed construction of a raw water vertical intake facility. Additional capital improvement projects are also being considered.

What is Disinfection?

Water utilities play a central role in protecting public health by ridding drinking water of potentially harmful bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms. They do so through a treatment process called disinfection.

Pathogens, such as Giardia, Cryptosporidium, and viruses, are often found in source water and can cause gastrointestinal illness. Illnesses include diarrhea, vomiting, cramps and other health risks. In many cases, water needs to be disinfected to inactivate (or kill) these microbial pathogens. However, disinfectants can react with naturally-occurring materials in the water to form disinfection byproducts.

What are Disinfection Byproducts?

Disinfection byproducts are formed when disinfectants (e.g. chlorine) used in the water treatment process react with natural organic matter (e.g. decaying vegetation) present in the source water. Different disinfectants produce different types or amounts of disinfection byproducts. Disinfection byproducts for which regulations have been established have been identified in drinking water, including trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, bromate, and chlorite.

What are Haloacetic Acids and HAA5?

Haloacetic acids (HAA5, HAA6Br, HAA9) are a group of disinfectant byproducts that are formed when disinfectants, such as chlorine or chloramine, are used to treat water and react with naturally occurring organic and inorganic matter present in source waters. Which HAA forms

depends on several factors, so HAAs are often tracked and described as groups of individual acidic compounds.

HAA5 includes: dibromoacetic acid, dichloroacetic acid, monobromoacetic acid, monochloroacetic acid, trichloroacetic acid.

What is the Disinfection Byproduct Rule?

Following the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, the EPA set standards for HAA5 in a series of regulations (Disinfection Byproducts Rule Stage 1 and 2). The federal enforceable standard for HAA5 is a maximum running annual average for each monitoring location of 60 micrograms/liter.

The Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule (DBPR) reduces drinking water exposure to disinfection byproducts. The Rule applies to community water systems and non-transient noncommunity systems, including those serving fewer than 10,000 people that add a disinfectant to the drinking water during any part of the treatment process.

The Stage 2 DBPR strengthens public health protection by tightening compliance monitoring requirements for Trihalomethanes (TTHM) and Haloacetic acids (HAA5).

What are the health effects?

Data from research studies indicate that several HAAs, e.g., dichloroacetic acid and trichloroacetic acid, may be carcinogenic in laboratory animals. Exposure to other HAAs has also been associated with reproductive and developmental effects in laboratory animals. The current Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) set for HAA5 is because of concern that exposure to HAAs over many years may increase the risk of cancer.

What can you do at home?

Reverse osmosis filters have been shown to reduce HAA5 but are expensive.

Activated carbon filters such as Brita and PUR filters can also reduce HAA5 levels. There are different types from simple pitchers to under sink models and are very affordable.

(Consumers should verify which products are NSF/ANSI 42 and/or 53 certified to remove HAA5.)

Other helpful links:

https://drinktap.org/Water-Info/Whats-in-My-Water/Disinfection-Byproducts

https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/stage-1-and-stage-2-disinfectants-and-disinfection-byproducts-rules